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TURNING THE PAGE

New $15M library opens in Strathcona

metroNEWS

JEN ST. DENIS/METRO

'Huge loophole' found in B.C.'s election laws

POLITICAL SCANDAL

Corporations, unions may be able to keep donations out of public eye

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

The B.C. Liberals will return nearly $175,000 in improper donations, according to the party's revised Elections B.C. filings, while their New Democrat opposition are handing back nearly $11,000 of such cash.

But a "huge loophole" in the province's election laws may have allowed corporations and unions in B.C. to keep their hefty donations out of the public eye — at least until long after the May 9 election is past.

According to Democracy Watch's Duff Conacher, voters should ask every MLA hopeful one question during all-candidate forums: "Will you disclose your donors before election day?" he suggested. "Then watch them all squirm."

Under B.C.'s lax donations rules — which limit campaign spending, but allow unlimited donations even from outside Canada — individual candidates don't have to reveal who gave them money until 90 days after every election.

That's in contrast to the annual reporting requirements for parties and riding associations.

"Millions of dollars of donations may be hidden from voters until after election day," argued Conacher. "But voters have a right to know who bankrolled election candidates before they vote."

On March 10, the RCMP's Sensitive Investigations Unit, part of the force's Federal Serious and Organized Crime division, began investigating "allegations of indirect contributions and other potential contraventions of the Election Act," the RCMP said. "Anyone who wanted to hide a donation … had an incentive to route donations to candidates, knowing those donations would not have to be disclosed before election day," Conacher argued.

Last month, a Forum Research poll found seven in 10 British Columbians want a ban on corporate and union donations.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Longtime Fox News host Bill O'Reilly given the boot amid harassment complaints. **World**

Battle for city supremacy

It's an age-old question: which is the greatest Canadian city? According to a recent analysis by Berlin-based rental aggregator Nestpick, Vancouver is the best in North America, at least for millennials. Toronto ranked 24th in the world — decent, but 14 places below our B.C. cousins. But who knows a city better than the people who live in it? We ask a Torontonian and a Vancouverite to settle the debate (once and for all).

VS

TORONTO

The city with more sports and less rain

Matt Elliott
Metro | Toronto

The first time I ever saw Vancouver, I was awed by the majesty of the Coast Mountains. A week later, I was over it. It's a fine place, but set aside those mountains and Toronto still tops it easily. Here are five reasons why.

1. Bigger is better
I'm a big-city guy, and in Canada it doesn't get more big city than Toronto. We're the fourth largest in North America. Vancouver's metro population, on the other hand, ranks a little below Mississauga's.

2. Toronto has seasons
Vancouverites have got to be real sick of people talking about all the rain — but seriously, what's with the rain? At least Toronto has a variety of weather: stupid hot summers and snowy winters, with actual seasons in between.

3. Better sports scene
It's probably dangerous to gloat about Toronto's oft-troubled sports franchises, but let's do it anyway. Toronto has two teams in the playoffs right now! Meanwhile, the Canucks are golfing and the Grizzlies play in Memphis.

4. We're world class(ish)
One of the best tech hubs in North America? Check. World-renowned events like TIFF and Pride? Check. A music scene cranking out internationally famous artists? Check. Whether you want to embrace the "world class city" label or not, Toronto has better claims to fame than the city that hosted the winter Olympics once.

5. Geography
From Toronto, you've got quick access to great, historic cities like Montreal, Boston, Halifax and New York.

Then you have Vancouver, with its easy drive to, um, Seattle. Just can't compare.

VANCOUVER

Functional politics? Yes please!

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

In my mid-twenties, I spent a year and a half living in Toronto and absolutely fell in love with the city the rest of Canada loves to hate. But ultimately, I chose to move back to Vancouver — a decision that was mostly about the weather and sentimental feelings about mountains. Here are my reasons Vancouver beats Toronto:

1. Toronto is too hot in the summer
Vancouverites are used to existing within a narrow temperature range: never colder than about 5 degrees, never hotter than 24 degrees. Anything outside of that range makes us wilt faster than a hemlock in a drought.

2. No natural compass point
The North Shore Mountains aren't just pretty — they're a handy direction post showing which way is north.

3. Smog
You blow your nose and brown stuff comes out. Ewwww.

4. Nude beach access
In Toronto the nude beach is a ferry ride away. In Vancouver, all you have to do is scramble down a very tall flight of cliff-side stairs.

5. Parks
Our parks are better. Our animals are bigger and meaner. Our water is fresher and cleaner and comes from mountain streams. We get to look at mountains and ocean and all you have is that big flat lake.

6. Raccoons
Our racoons are alive, and all you have is that dead one.

7. Amalgamation
Our cities never amalgamated and therefore city politics is not a big shouty mess.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK *Is Vancouver a better city for millennials than Toronto (and every other place, for that matter)? Reach out over email at vancouver@metronews.ca or contact us on Twitter @vancouvermetro or Facebook via facebook.com/vancouvermetro.*

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B.C.'s overdose crisis not slowing down

DRUGS

Highest number of deaths in a single month just recorded

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

British Columbians are continuing to die of drug overdoses at an alarming rate, according to the latest numbers released by the BC Coroners Service: more people died in March than in any month recorded so far.

In March, 120 people overdosed and died, compared to 79 deaths in March 2016 and 30 deaths in March 2015.

Following a spike in November and December of last year, the numbers continue to rise in 2017: 119 people died in January while 108 lost their lives in February. People are dying in their homes and in some cases in their vehicles. But there have still not been any deaths recorded at overdose preventions sites, locations where volunteers or staff are on hand to provide first aid in case someone overdoses.

120

Number of people that died in the month of March from overdoses.

A volunteer group in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside set up the first overdose prevention site in September, which initially operated without official permission. Health authorities and the provincial government began opening more overdose prevention sites throughout the province starting in December 2016.

The prevalence of the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl and a stronger variation, carfentanil, are certainly behind the increase in deaths, said Lisa Lapointe, B.C.'s chief coroner. The number of illicit deaths where fentanyl was not detected has remained relatively stable since 2011.

"The introduction of illicit fentanyl to the illegal drug market has had devastating results," Lapointe said in a statement.

"It has been just over a year since the provincial health officer's declaration of a provincial health emergency and, while harm reduction measures now in place are reversing thousands of overdoses, long-term measures to stem this tide must include meaningful education."

The March data shows that the Okanagan now has the second highest overdose death rate, at 39.9 out of 100,000 people. Vancouver has the highest overdose death rate, at 58 out of 100,000.

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Grand Unified Theory actor Scott Bellis portrays an astrophysics professor whose family life unravels. SUPPLIED

GRAND UNIFIED THEORY

Van-made flick hits Canadian film week

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

"I always think that a change in life is accompanied by a proportional amount of turbulence," muses a character in North Vancouver filmmaker David Ray's latest comedy, Grand Unified Theory, which is being screened Thursday as part of Canadian Film Week.

The comedy centers on a brilliant astrophysics professor — played by Scott Bellis — whose family life unravels over a single weekend, viewed through some of his cosmic theories.

Ray said he was inspired to seek life-lessons in the realm of astrophysics, and to remind viewers that even geniuses can miss what's right in front of them, in their own lives.

"It was inspired by all these wild and wonderful way to see the universe," Ray, 49, told Metro in a phone interview. "And saw (astrophysics) as a unique lens to help explore human behaviour. We often explain it with religion or psychology, but we don't often examine what we're made of."

The opening quote of the film is from late scientist Carl Sagan, whose own science fiction book Contact was adapted into a successful film that takes a more serious approach to such questions: "We are like butterflies who flutter for a day and think it is forever." University of British Columbia physics and astronomy professor Jaymie Matthews helped "backstop" some of the scientific ideas in Grand Unified Theory, Ray revealed.

"This is not a documentary about science," Matthews quipped in a UBC statement, "but a story about the uncertain science of human relationships, when a family is turned upside down."

> **It was inspired by all these wild and wonderful way to see the universe.**
> Filmmaker David Ray

Matthews also helped Ray out with extras from his actual UBC classes. But ultimately, the film is more about the hilarious events that can complicate family life, than it is about the scientific theories of its protagonist.

"This guy would be a certifiable genius, but the fact of the matter is that he's in the darkness like the rest of us," Ray said.

"It's about one weekend in their life where everything goes wrong. The theory behind the movie is that everybody knows something, everybody has a piece of the puzzle, but you can only make sense of it from different perspectives."

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Stephanie Kripps with patron Byron Cruz on Wednesday. JEN ST. DENIS/METRO

Neighbourhoods get library at last

PUBLIC SPACE

Branch opened Wednesday after years of planning

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

It's been planned for decades, but on Wednesday Vancouver's inner-city neighbourhoods of Strathcona, Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside finally got their own full-service Vancouver Public Library branch.

"I was branch head of Carnegie Library and it was very fulfilling," said Stephanie Kripps, head of nəcaʔmat ct Strathcona branch, of the nearby Carnegie reading room at Main and Hastings.

"It was challenging, diverse, interesting — people help one another and you don't have to say how can I possibly involve the community? The community is there, and I knew it would be the same here."

On Wednesday, just an hour after the brand new library opened for the first time, the branch was full of teenagers, seniors and all ages in between. People were absorbed in books and magazines, using the computers, chatting and watching a video that explained the meaning of the Musqueam name of the branch (nəcaʔmat ct means "we are one").

Byron Cruz, who works with new immigrants and refugee claimants at a resource centre nearby, had dropped in to check out the new branch.

"We have families who are waiting to be accepted to school," Cruz explained, "and while they are waiting — because it can take months, years — we at least have a way of keeping the children reading books and learning."

The community was previously served by the small reading room at Carnegie Community Centre, and the library at Strathcona Elementary also doubled as a public library, said Sandra Singh, chief librarian at the Vancouver Public Library.

"Because it was in the school, it really limited our ability to provide a full range of services and of course it closed down in August," Singh said. "Access to a full range of library services really is an equalizing force in the community, because there are so many things, even wanting to read a book or have internet access, is often beyond their means."

The library cost $15 million to build and is located on the ground floor of a new building that provides 21 units of housing to single mothers.

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Police, organizers ready for 4-20 rally

EVENT

Beach Avenue along Sunset Beach closed Thursday

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

The stage is set for today's 4-20 pot rally at Sunset Beach in Vancouver and organizers say the annual protest is here to stay despite the federal government's intention to legalize pot next year.

The unpermitted event, which drew 25,000 people to the beach last year, will feature more than 300 vendor booths and live music.

Park board commissioners voted against giving 4-20 event organizers a permit for this year's event but that hasn't changed things on the ground, said marijuana advocate, Dana Larsen.

Organizers have been working with park board and city staff all year to ensure the rally goes as smoothly as possible, he said.

"We negotiated with staff and they encouraged us to set up early."

But the park board chair made it clear earlier this month that staff are not helping 4-20 event organizers — in fact, the park board is shutting down power as well as water to the concession stand and washrooms at Sunset Beach.

Larsen says his team is bringing in its own porta potties for the event.

Pot rally organizers also hired their own garbage disposal crew this year to ensure there is no repeat of last year's messy situation, where the park board spent the morning cleaning trash from the beach.

"Our intent is to leave the beach as clean as we found it," said Larsen.

But while Vancouver's 4-20 rally has begun to take on a celebratory tone in recent years, Larsen says the event will continue as a protest against marijuana laws.

"Until we get the laws we want and we have a day when marijuana is legalized like we want it to be, there will be 4-20."

Larsen argues the proposed legislation shows policymakers still discriminate against marijuana users.

"I don't like how cannabis is still being treated so much more severely than alcohol."

He noted that someone could be sentenced to prison for up to 14 years for selling marijuana to a minor while doing the same with alcohol usually results in a fine.

"Well, it's a step forward," he said.

"But its de-criminalization more than legalization."

Another group is planning to hold a marijuana protest Thursday at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and drivers should expect traffic disruption on Robson Street between Hornby and Howe streets, according to Vancouver police.

Officers will be checking drivers for signs of alcohol and drug impairment throughout Thursday, according to a release.

DETAILS

- 900 - 1300 Beach Avenue (eastbound) will be closed 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Westbound lane will remain open for local residents.

Thousands of people gather at Sunset Beach during the annual 4-20 cannabis culture celebration in Vancouver, B.C., on Wednesday. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

LEGALIZATION

What do Canadians think about marijuana legalization?

- **63%** — In favour
- **37%** — Stand opposed
- **66%** — Say the new law will fail to keep marijuana away from youth
- **55%** — Believe the new law will fail to cut organized crime out of marijuana trade.

SOURCE: ANGUS REID INSTITUTE

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NEWFOUNDLAND

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A large iceberg is visible from the shore in Ferryland, an hour south of St. John's, Newfoundland on April 10.

A towering iceberg stationed off Newfoundland's east coast is drawing dozens of people to the small shoreline community sitting in its shadow.

PAUL DALY/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Clean-tech industry growing sluggishly

ENVIRONMENT

Feds too slow on investment, report warns

Growth in Canada's clean tech industry has slowed to the point that the sector could miss out on billions in revenue and thousands of new jobs without urgent government action, according to a report published Thursday.

Celine Bak, president of Analytica Advisors, a firm in Ottawa that monitors the industry and published the report, said investments to boost clean tech in the 2017 budget aren't moving fast enough. Without quick access to capital, many of the biggest players in Canada's $13-billion clean tech sector will fall behind global competitors, Bak said.

"There's an urgent need for the money you've proposed to be deployed," said Bak, referring to the Liberal government's 2017 budget pledge of $1.8 billion over three years for clean tech financing.

None of that money, however, is slated to roll out this year.

"It's back-end loaded and the need is really short term," Bak said. "That's not going to be sufficient, especially for the biggest firms that are in very competitive global markets, where we're talking about weeks — not months — as a timeline that needs to be executed upon."

The industry includes more than 850 firms in Canada that employ 55,200 people, the report says. These companies range from those working on more efficient power grid technology and cleaner ways to dig for oil, to recycling, transportation and agriculture.

The 2017 Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report, released Thursday, paints a picture of an industry that is still growing, but at a slower rate than previous years. Revenues in the sector jumped 8 per cent from 2014 to 2015, while they grew at around 11 per cent per year from 2011 to 2013.

> **There's an urgent need for the money you've proposed to be deployed.**
> Celine Bak

But profits retained by clean tech companies in Canada continue to drop, and the report says "the industry is awash in red ink and shareholder returns are negative." This includes companies working on low-carbon transportation, which have seen five straight years of negative returns in a developing sector that is vital in the push to meet Canada's global emissions targets for 2030, according to the report.

At the same time, the report says Canada's global market share in clean technology dropped 12 per cent from 2008 to 2015, when it stood at 1.4 per cent. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

DAIRY INDUSTRY

'Don't point the finger to Canada'

Jessica Botelho-Urbanski
Metro | Winnipeg

After a pointed shout-out from President Trump Tuesday, Manitoba dairy farmers fired back, calling his comments about Canadian dairy farming "very unfair" in their own right.

At a speech in Wisconsin, Trump criticized the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and blamed Canada for "some very unfair things (that) have happened to our dairy farmers."

David Wiens, a third-generation dairy farmer who lives and works near Grunthal, Man., said Trump's claims are "certainly not fact."

Wiens, also the chairperson of Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, said dairy imports from the U.S. into Canada have increased 17 per cent in the last year.

He emphasized Canada's domestic dairy policy doesn't affect international trade.

Lisa Dyck, a dairy farmer and ice cream producer with Cornell Creme near Anola, Man., said she was confident the Canadian government would stick by its dairy producers. She said Trump's comments didn't concern her.

"I think he just says a lot of things without thinking of the consequences," Dyck said. "I think it's great that he's behind his farmers — he should be. But he needs to look at this as a whole."

"In the end, we're all farmers. We understand. We are sad that they don't have a place for their milk, but we didn't do this… (so) don't point the finger to Canada," she said. "I hope they find a solution to their problem, I really do. But to point this at Canada, it's very unfair."

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Bill O'Reilly ousted by Fox

BROADCAST

Allegations of harassment and payouts brought to light

Bill O'Reilly THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bill O'Reilly has lost his job at Fox News Channel following reports that five women had been paid millions of dollars to keep quiet about harassment allegations.

21st Century Fox issued a statement Wednesday that "after a thorough and careful review of the allegations, the company and Bill O'Reilly have agreed that Bill O'Reilly will not be returning to the Fox News Channel."

He had been scheduled to return from a vacation next Monday. It marks a stunning end to a near-perfect marriage between a pugnacious personality and network. For two decades, O'Reilly has ruled the "no spin zone" with cable news' most popular show, and his ratings had never been higher.

In a memo to Fox staff on Wednesday, the Murdochs said the decision followed an extensive review done in collaboration with an outside counsel.

Fox said that Tucker Carlson's show would move to 8 p.m. to replace O'Reilly and that the panel talk show The Five would take Carlson's time slot at 9 p.m.

The fast-moving story took shape with an April 2 report in The New York Times that five women had been paid a total of $13 million to keep quiet about unpleasant encounters with O'Reilly, who has denied any wrongdoing. Dozens of his show's advertisers fled, even though O'Reilly's viewership increased. O'Reilly has denied wrongdoing.

Even though at least one of the harassment cases against O'Reilly dated back more than a decade and was widely reported then, the accumulation of cases outlined in the Times damaged him much more extensively. It wasn't clear when those stories would end, with a group of women demonstrating in front of Fox's headquarters Tuesday and another woman, a former clerical worker at Fox, calling a harassment hotline and accusing the host of boorish behaviour.

O'Reilly's fans aren't likely to be happy about him losing his job, particularly on a controversy set in motion by the Times. His show's viewership increased the week after the story appeared — O'Reilly didn't address it on the air — and has sunk since he left for vacation. Potential successors like Dana Perino, Eric Bolling and Greg Gutfeld have substituted for O'Reilly since he left for vacation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VENEZUELA THE 'MOTHER OF ALL MARCHES' A demonstrator walks along a barricade set up during opposition protests in Caracas, Venezuela, on Wednesday. Opponents of President Nicolas Maduro called on Venezuelans to take to the streets on Wednesday for what they dubbed the "mother of all marches" against the embattled socialist leader. Government supporters are holding their own counter demonstration. FERNANDO LLANO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEVELAND

McDonald's order trips up Facebook slaying suspect

Steve Stephens was undone by a 20-piece McNuggets and of fries.

The man who police say shot a Cleveland retiree at random and posted video of the killing on Facebook was recognized by the drive-thru attendant of a McDonald's restaurant outside Erie, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday morning.

The worker called 911, and state police gave chase. It ended a few miles away, as authorities say Stephens then killed himself. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INAUGURATION

Huge indeed: $107M in donations

It was huge. Big money from billionaires, corporations and a roster of NFL owners poured into Donald Trump's inaugural committee in record-shattering amounts — to pull off an event that was lower-key than previous inaugural celebrations.

That leaves a bit of a mystery: What the $107 million was spent for and how much was left over — the excess, if any, to go to charity. It also raises a new round of questions about the influence of money in politics, this time for a president who promised to "drain the swamp" of Washington.

Contribution records from Trump's inaugural committee, released Wednesday by the Federal Election Commission, show the president who railed against the corrupting influence of big-money donors was only too willing to accept top-dollar checks for his swearing-in festivities.

Trump's total take was about double the previous record set by Barack Obama, who collected $53 million in contributions in 2009, and had money left over to spend on the annual Easter egg roll and other White House events. Trump's top inaugural donor was Las Vegas gambling billionaire Sheldon Adelson, who gave $5 million. He and his wife came away with prime seats for Trump's swearing-in ceremony on Jan. 20 and gained access to a private lunch with the new president and lawmakers. Phil Ruffin, another casino mogul and close friend of Trump, was among dozens of donors who gave $1 million each.

At least eight NFL team owners kicked in big money for the inauguration. Seven of them, including Patriots owner Bob Kraft, whose team won the Super Bowl and visited the White House Wednesday, gave $1 million apiece.

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Public dime could pay for U.S. projects

FUNDING

Bill would lift curbs on infrastructure bank proposal

The infrastructure bank could fund cross-border projects such as bridges between Windsor and Detroit. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A new federal agency designed to fuse public and private dollars to help build infrastructure in Canada could end up building new roads and bridges south of the border — so long as they connect to the Great White North.

The legislation for the Liberal government's proposed infrastructure bank would allow the arm's-length organization to use public money to help bankroll or financially backstop projects that are "in Canada or partly in Canada," provided there's a financial benefit and a physical connection to the country.

The wording means Ottawa could choose to fund projects with the potential to generate revenue for private investors or the government itself — toll roads or bridges, for instance, such as the Gordie Howe span between Windsor and Detroit, which is being financed with both private and public money.

"If in fact a vehicle like the bank can enable projects like that to go ahead more readily, then I think that's positive," said Mark Romoff, president and CEO of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships.

Romoff said it could also help advance Canadian interests south of the border, particularly at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump wants to leverage private money to help pay for a promised $1-trillion infrastructure program.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BROADCASTING

Canadians dropping TV: Report

A new report says the number of Canadians cutting the cord on their TV services is expected to increase this year.

The Convergence Research Group estimates in a report released Wednesday that TV subscriptions in Canada will drop by 247,000 this year, up from 220,000 subscriber losses last year.

26%

The report estimates 3.8 million households or 26 per cent did not have TV services at home last year.

That would represent an annual drop of two per cent, and the consulting firm says that decline is expected to grow by three per cent in 2019.

The report estimates 3.8 million households or 26 per cent did not have traditional TV services at home last year and projects that will rise to 4.18 million or 28.4 per cent this year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

VIDEO GAMES

Mini Super Nintendo could be on the way

Andrew Fifield
Metro | Toronto

Just days after confirming the end of the obscenely popular NES Classic, Nintendo appears to be working on a Super Nintendo follow-up.

According to Eurogamer, "sources close to the company" say the miniature replica will be ready to hit store shelves in time for the holiday season and that planned production of the device was a factor in the NES Classic's unceremonious exit.

Released late last year, the plug-and-play NES Classic came packed with 30 games and was immediately greeted by overwhelming demand. The rapturous reception surprised the company — who reportedly considered it little more than a one-off novelty product — and the system was continually in extremely short supply, giving rise to a robust resale market.

Nintendo has not confirmed the report, so any details on games that would be included with the miniature SNES are strictly speculation.

Nintendo plans to follow up the massively successful NES Classic with a sequel based on the Super Nintendo. CONTRIBUTED

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CHANTAL HÉBERT ON TRUMP TAKING ON CANADA

Somewhat predictably, no amount of prime ministerial appeasement is turning out to be enough to keep Canada on the good side of the Trump White House.

Ever since last fall's American presidential election campaign, Justin Trudeau has played nice with Donald Trump, routinely bending over backward to avoid taking the new administration head on.

Parsing the prime minister's comments on Trump's eventful first three months one would be hard-pressed to find anything but kind words about the new occupant of the White House.

When the president moved to suspend the American refugee program and to ban citizens from six Muslim majority countries from travelling to the U.S., Trudeau issued a tweet to restate Canada's pro-refugee policy but refrained from openly criticizing the U.S. move.

When Trump cut foreign aid funding for contraception and family planning programs, the Canadian government raised its own contribution but otherwise kept its peace.

Ditto as the American administration confirmed its determination to walk away from the Paris treaty on climate change.

Earlier this month, the prime minister offered Canada's full support for Trump's unilateral decision to launch airstrikes on a Syrian military facility in retaliation for the regime's chemical gas attack on civilians. In the process, Trudeau soft-pedalled his party's long-standing commitment to multilateral international action. A few days later, the prime minister called for the removal of the Bashar Assad regime.

There is plenty of evidence that Trump is, to put it politely, a chameleon-type of politician.

Somewhat predictably, no amount of prime ministerial appeasement is turning out to be enough to keep Canada on the good side of the Trump White House and off the president's ever-changing hit list.

On Tuesday, he lashed out at NAFTA in general and Canadian dairy policy in particular. "In Canada, some very unfair things have happened to our dairy farmers, and others, and we're going to start working on that," Trump told a Wisconsin audience. "NAFTA has been very, very bad. We're going to make some very big changes or we're going to get rid of NAFTA once and for all," he added.

Contrast that with what the president had to say on the heels of his first face-to-face meeting with Trudeau less than two months ago and consider that there were no major public disagreements between the two governments over the interval.

"We have a very outstanding trade relationship with Canada. We'll be tweaking it," Trump opined in mid-February. "We'll be doing certain things that are going to benefit both of our countries."

At the time, that statement was greeted with jubilant relief in some Canadian quarters. That jubilation was somewhat premature.

Anyone professing surprise at the sight of the U.S. president blowing hot and cold on the same issue over a matter of weeks has not been keeping track of Trump's first three months in the White House.

There is plenty of evidence that he is, to put it politely, a chameleon-type of politician. Trump tends to blend his rhetoric to his environment, as often as not to the detriment of consistency.

But if anyone still harboured the delusion that a nascent bond between Trudeau and Trump would shelter Canada from this president's volatile approach to policy-making, this week's developments should have settled the issue.

FRENEMIES Justin Trudeau has been playing nice with Donald Trump since he took office, but there is no shelter from the president's volatility, writes Chantal Hébert. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crafting alliances on Capitol Hill and in the states' legislatures — as Canada has been attempting to do as part of an all-hands-on deck political lobbying operation — may not be as glamorous as spending a night at the theatre with Ivanka Trump but it may yield more reliable results.

So far, Trudeau's velvet glove approach to the Trump administration enjoys widespread support in this country. But that comes with the underlying assumption that the glove is not an empty one and that an iron hand will manifest itself in defence of Canada's interests.

That did happen on Tuesday. In a strongly worded letter, Trudeau's envoy to Washington, David MacNaughton, refuted Trump's contention that Canada's dairy policy was wreaking havoc on American dairy farmers.

Still, up to now Canada's efforts on the U.S. front have unfolded on a rare bipartisan basis. Former prime minister Brian Mulroney has been providing Trudeau with insider advice on American trade dynamics. Conservative interim leader Rona Ambrose has struck a supportive role in her own visits to the U.S., as has Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, a premier otherwise known as the prime minister's chief provincial critic.

But there are trade issues on which it will be difficult to continue to present a united front as the war of words turns into a full-fledged negotiation. Canada's dairy and poultry supply management system is not far from the top of the divisive list.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

New pot laws must include a pardon for old convictions

Vicky Mochama
Metro

We cannot have a future pot policy that doesn't deal with criminalized pasts.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale has said that the new pot legislation will not include any special amnesty for past convictions.

This is a mistake.

The government's proposed legislation follows a public health approach of reducing harm and preventing problematic drug use. But the legislation, which is slated to come into effect by July 1, 2018, cannot just serve future drug users — and businesses, for that matter. It should also serve the health and wellbeing of the young, racialized men and women who are currently in court and in prison on drug charges.

According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, nearly 60,000 Canadians are arrested for possessing 30 g or less of cannabis every year — that's nearly three per cent of all arrests. And at least half a million Canadians have a criminal record for possessing that much pot.

In 2013, nearly half of all drug-related court cases involved cannabis, and young people between 12 and 24 were more likely to be arrested for pot than for any other drug.

The Justice Department either doesn't publish or does not track drug-offences by the race and ethnicity of the offender. Anecdotally, however, it's clear that the imagined drug offender is a racialized person.

One only has to hear it from Bill Blair, the Liberal government's point man on the pot file. In his telling, when youth buy marijuana, they get it from "a gangster behind some apartment building" or "a criminal in a stairwell," he told the Toronto Star on separate occasions.

In case the dog-whistle isn't loud enough, Toronto's former top cop is selling the government's pot plan with a racially-charged message.

There is ample data to show that black and white people, on a percentage basis, use marijuana at nearly the same rates. Yet black users are arrested at a vastly higher rate. (Much of this data is American. Yet again we find that data on race is patchy at best in Canada.)

Evidence of this racial arrest gap can be found in our prison populations. From 2005 to 2015, the black inmate population grew by 69 per cent. This increase dovetails with the previous Conservative administration's tough-on-crime legislation that also led to an increase in the imprisonment of women and Indigenous people.

But if compassionate pardons are not part of the new legislation, thousands of Canadians — especially young racialized men and women — already languishing in the criminal justice system will be left behind. A majority of male prisoners struggle with addiction and substance abuse issues.

For the government, a clean slate starts next Canada Day. Many Canadians need that clean slate now.

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We don't *really* know our rivers

EARTH DAY

Water demand and pollution are growing threats: Author

Canada has an incredible wealth of fresh water, much of it in rivers — from rushing giants like the Niagara and Yukon River to the swimming hole in your neighbourhood.

After 10 years studying rivers, Sean Fleming, hydrologist, data scientist and adjunct professor at UBC's department of earth, ocean and atmospheric sciences, has come to a conclusion: we don't know enough about rivers. And if we aren't informed, we can't protect them. Fleming's new book, Where the River Runs: Scientific Reflections on Earth's Waterways, aims to fix that. We asked him what we can do to help rivers run better.

Is there anything in your research that would surprise people who don't know much about rivers?

The example folks in Canada may not be aware of is the Colorado River. The Colorado River Compact was put together in the early 1900s to divide the waters of the Colorado River between different states and Mexico. It was derived on the basis of the data available at that point. As a matter of sheer bad luck, that period of time happened to be one of the wettest periods in several hundred years. That wasn't discovered until the 1970s. Because of that, the Colorado River no longer flows to its mouth. Knowing more about the science of rivers has real, serious implications.

What needs to be done to protect rivers?

One: We need to understand how rivers work. We need better models for simulating what they'll look like in the future, and how climate changes will affect them. That provides the information we need to make decisions. Secondly, reducing needs. Global water demand is expected to increase by 55 per cent by 2050. That's a huge problem, given that a billion people already do not have access to adequate clean water. But there's a silver lining. For example, in the U.S. water demand has stabilized at 1970s levels.

Is it the same story in Canada?

Canada's track record with water management is not the best compared to other western countries. And that's simply because we're really lucky — we've got a lot of empty space and a lot of water.

Vancouver for instance, is a very wet part of the world. It wouldn't seem like you'd ever run into water supply issues, but it's happening, because you've got such a tremendous congregation of people in such a small area, and the water is seasonal. That's going to be a huge challenge.

What can individual people do for rivers?

There's a tremendous amount you can do. There are watershed clean-up days. You can get involved with riparian planting (restoring trees and vegetation around rivers). In terms of your personal choices, watch what you flush down the drain and how you dispose of things like paint. It can help a great deal at the local level.

Do you have a favourite river?

Oh my goodness. Maybe the Cowichan in British Columbia or the Rio Grande in the U.S. southwest. I love the landscapes around both of them. They both present a lot of opportunities and challenges.

SALMON RUN

You have a chapter about how clouds talk to fish. What?

Weather literally transmits data to fish species (living in rivers). When it rains, river levels go up. That affects ecological systems. One example is salmon runs on the west coast. If the fall rains come too late or they're too weak, the river levels will not rise enough for salmon to make a successful spawning run. Conversely, if it's too stormy in the winter, it can excavate the fish eggs out of the creek bed.

Canada has a wealth of rivers, B.C.'s magnificent Fraser River being one of them, but Sean Fleming argues Canadians don't know enough about this type of body of water. ISTOCK

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Gowdy's back with a story about little sis

PERSPECTIVE

Little Sister transports a woman into another body

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Little Sister is author Barbara Gowdy's first novel in a decade. She wrote it while suffering from debilitating back pain, lying down in bed using a reclining chair for her laptop. CONTRIBUTED

Last fall, after Barbara Gowdy discovered a lump in her breast, her younger sister Mary offered to drive her to Toronto's Prince Margaret Hospital for a series of tests. As Gowdy was filling out forms, Mary suddenly fell to the floor in a seizure, caused by a massive brain haemorrhage. If Mary hadn't been in that hospital room at that exact moment, feet away from an oxygen tank and doctors to rush her into surgery, she would not have survived. Gowdy — now in remission after radiation and a lumpectomy — says it was her cancer that saved her sister's life.

Later that fateful day, after undergoing a core biopsy and being reassured that her sister was doing well in another hospital, an exhausted Gowdy came home to a box sitting on her Cabbagetown front porch. The box was labelled "Little Sister," and for a shocking moment the author forgot that was the title of her much-anticipated new novel, her first publication in a decade.

It would be understandable if Gowdy wrote about the cruel limitations of the human body. On top of the breast cancer, she has suffered 14 years from a mysteriously debilitating chronic back pain that limits her mobility. Most of Little Sister was written lying down in bed using a reclining tray for her laptop, while undergoing a litany of unsuccessful drug therapies that did little more than make her foggy and depressed. But Gowdy's curiosity about our inner lives runs deeper than skin and bones. Since she can remember, she has asked the fundamental question: "What would it be like to be you?"

Little Sister, which takes place over a week, follows Rose, a 30-something woman who lives a mundane existence running a repertory theatre with her mother, who suffers from progressive dementia. When a series of freak lightening storms hit the city, Rose's migraine-like symptoms inexplicably transport her inside the body of a stranger named Harriet, who is having an affair with a married co-worker. This erotic experience is a far cry from the dullness of Rose's own relationship with Victor, an older, serious-minded meteorologist. No wonder Rose becomes almost physically obsessed to re-enter Harriet, who may also have an otherworldly connection to her deceased younger sister.

Gowdy suggests that her ongoing existential preoccupation with how others see the world may be connected with some discomfort she has with her own self. "I'm always curious about how people cope. It seems very touching to me," she says. "There's that saying, 'Walk a mile in my shoes,' but I was thinking, 'Walk a mile in my body, spend an hour in my mind.'"

In writing Harriet, who is described as "kinetic" and the opposite of staid Rose, Gowdy purposely held back on exposing the character's thoughts. She wanted the book's strange occurrences to remain as much a mystery to readers as they are to Rose, and to avoid a retread of the 1999 Spike Jonze movie Being John Malkovich. "I wanted her to inhabit the body more. It wasn't just 'what it would be like being you,' and ending there, it's 'what is it like to be you and then come back to me,'" she says.

Over her lauded career and eight books, Gowdy has been dubbed a risk-taker in Canadian literature, whether it's for exploring the inner worlds of elephants in the Giller Prize-nominated White Bone or for her empathetic portrayal of a necrophiliac in the 1992 story collection We So Seldom Look on Love. But she doesn't necessarily buy that risk-taking label. Gowdy suggests perhaps it's because she never writes the same book twice: she inhabits her characters, and then moves on.

"Once I'm done with a certain voice or point or view, I'm really done," she says.

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Behind the L.A. riots, 25 years later

THE SHOW: L.A. Burning (A&E)
THE MOMENT: The riot begins

April 29, 1992. Four Los Angeles police officers are acquitted of any criminal charges in the beating of Rodney King, even though a videotape was viewed by the world. Disbelieving, enraged protestors flood the intersection of Florence and Normandy streets.

Police try to quell the crowd. Two protestors are arrested. Furious onlookers begin smashing car windows and looting the corner liquor store. Lieutenant Michael Moulin orders his cops to pull out.

Photographer Bart Bartholomew, who is white, takes pictures of the cruisers pulling away. But in a cold second, the crowd turns on him. Someone smashes a two-by-four into his face, breaking his jaw. Neighbourhood resident Tim Goldman escorts Bartholomew to his car and waves away the protesters who jump on its hood. Bartholomew pulls away. But the riot continues for two days.

I lived in L.A. then, and it doesn't feel like 25 years ago; it feels like yesterday. But five separate docs have been made to mark the anniversary. This one, executive-produced by the director John Singleton, interviews participants about then and now.

What's chillingly obvious is that the racial profiling that set the protest aflame hasn't changed – witness the ongoing murders of black men by police. What's changed is the riot gear. Notorious L.A. police chief Daryl Gates grievously underestimated public anger in '92, and sent his cops in unprotected. That's the only mistake that police all over the U.S. have corrected.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Executive producer of L.A. Burning John Singleton. CONTRIBUTED

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metro HOME

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White Garden unveiled at Kensington Palace to honour 20th anniversary of Princess Diana's death

MEET THE CONDO

Mount Pleasant's new high-tech homes

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

A collection of 29 condominiums in the heart of Mount Pleasant. Synchro features one and two bedroom homes or penthouses on the roof of this six-storey development. Residents will live in a people-centric neighbourhood with views of downtown and the North Shore mountains.

Housing amenities

Each unit is designed with smart home technologies such as wireless lighting and climate control. Outlets include USB plug-in options and keyless entry offers residents the choice to control access to their home via Bluetooth, including managing access from smartphones.

Location and transit

Main Street buses are frequent and Main Street SkyTrain Station isn't far off. The proposed extension to Main and Broadway would offer residents access to the train line in a few minutes' walk. Those with cars can easily access Main Street, Broadway, or head up to 12th to connect with the freeway.

In the neighbourhood

Mount Pleasant offers residents plenty of choice, whether it's in the form of rest and relaxation, dining out, or entertainment. Residents will live a block away from the infamous Dude Chilling Park, as well as within walking distance to several craft breweries and cafés.

NEED TO KNOW

What: Synchro
Developer: Bold Properties
Designer: Portico Design Group
Location: 379 E. Broadway
Building: Six-storey mixed-use
Models: One and two bedroom, penthouse
Sizes: Starting from 529 square feet
Pricing: Please call sales line
Status: Selling
Occupancy: 2018
Sales centre: 379 E. Broadway
Phone: (778) 996-2653
Website: synchro.bold.ca

Evolution of 1920s American design

INTERIORS

Smithsonian showcases best of furniture from Jazz Age

A new show at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum invites visitors to explore Jazz Age design in all its glittering, decadent and innovative glory.

Edgy furniture and tableware; textiles and wallpapers in rich oranges and teals; odes to the New York skyscraper — there's nothing quietly "decorative" in The Jazz Age: American Style in the 1920s, which is on view in New York through Aug. 20 and then opens at the Cleveland Museum of Art on Sept. 30. It runs there through Jan. 14, 2018.

Visitors should check preconceptions about Art Deco at the door. That popular term for 1920s style was coined well after the era ended, says Sarah Coffin, a curator at the Cooper Hewitt, who co-curated the exhibit with Stephen Harrison, a curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The pivotal era that linked a more traditionalist esthetic before it to the Bauhaus and mid-century modern eras that came later was more aptly known in its own time as the Jazz Age. Through over 400 works, many of them never before displayed in public, this show reveals why.

"Exploring the significant impact of European influences, the explosive growth of American cities, avant-garde artistic movements, new social mores and the role of technology, The Jazz Age seeks to define the American spirit of the period," says Cooper Hewitt Director Caroline Baumann.

The show begins quietly with a relatively staid section focusing on the American colonial and Federalist designs in furniture and tableware that were favoured by traditionalists of the early 1920s. This section serves as a point of reference as the decade then lurches from traditionalist to decidedly forward-looking.

A New Look reveals furniture and other design pieces of the early 1920s with a more modern sense of style. Works by cutting-edge French designers reveal 18th century styles revisited with a luxurious, sleek and modern sensibility. Furniture is paired with ceramics, textiles and wall coverings in bold, bright flora and fauna patterns, particularly in brash teals and oranges.

Around the corner, another section underlines the revolutionary social context behind increasingly innovative Jazz Age style. Women had earned the right to vote and many cast aside old social customs. Despite Prohibition, an array of glamorous cocktail shakers and glasses reveals rules being, very stylishly, bent.

Another section reveals the impact of the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts, in Paris. New esthetics, along with a fascination of industrial design and the powerful symbolism of American skyscrapers, led to skyscraper-inspired wall coverings and bookshelves, desks and tableware.

The exhibit reveals movement in the late 1920s toward more abstract designs, particularly in architecture, which discovered open-plan interiors. Finally, we are brought to the end of the '20s, when machines inspired much of American taste, including the arrival of bent chrome furniture, combining sleek modern forms with mass production.

The show ends in the early 1930s with now-mass-produced innovations made in cheaper iterations with the start of the Great Depression. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Installation views of The Jazz Age: American Style in the 1920s, on until the end of August, at the SmithsonianDesign Museum. PHOTOS COURTESY THE SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GARDENS

Virtual tech helps you mock up your plot before digging in

Just as virtual technology has become a common tool for anyone planning to repaint or redecorate a home, a growing array of apps can make landscaping easier too.

"We've seen an increase in virtual interior design services within the last two years, so it's only natural that this functionality would make its way to the exterior of the home as well," said Stephanie Sisco, Real Simple magazine's home editor.

A few of the more popular DIY gardening apps include Garden Designer, Design your New Surroundings, Garden Plan Pro and Perennial Match.

"We have seen several hundred thousand downloads," says Patrick Pozzuto, founder of the iScape app, aimed at both professional and home landscapers. Based in Mount Pleasant, S.C., Pozzuto worked as a contractor before launching his app.

"Arranging plants using a touch screen is way easier than using your lower back to do it," he says.

"But while the pros have been using apps for a long time now, home gardeners do encounter some hiccups sometimes," he admits. "They don't necessarily know what plant goes with what, and what areas it'll grow in. And some people don't have an artistic mind."

Dave Whitinger, executive director of the National Gardening Association, says that while some tech-savvy gardeners quickly get the hang of landscaping apps, the learning curve is steep and they may be impractical for most home gardeners.

The association, founded in 1971 and based in Jacksonville, Texas, helps put out the Gardening for Dummies book series and hosts the website garden.org.

"The reality is that while the virtual tools are great for a minority of gardeners, many more people find them far too confusing," he says. Many home gardeners, he says, would be better off using a pencil and graph paper, with each square representing 6 inches, or whatever scale is appropriate for the garden.

Yet even for amateurs, he notes, plant knowledge can mean the difference between failure and success with gardening and landscaping projects. Garden.org features a database, searchable by city, that gives the frost dates for an area and vegetable planting strategies and schedules for the spring and fall seasons.

"Knowledge like that is crucial to whether a person's gardening project succeeds," he says. "Planting dates vary depending on where you live. Just because you see the plants for sale in the nursery doesn't mean it's the right time to plant."

And even if you haven't figured out all the features of the gardening apps, they can be a good way to show professional landscapers what you have in mind, Pozzuto says.

Richard Heller of Greener By Design, a firm in the New York area that uses 3-D software to help with both landscape design and communication with clients, says the software makes a big difference.

"3-D software is still not very common, and it gives us an amazing competitive edge. It allows people to see what's not planted, so they start expanding on projects they have in mind," he says.

"The software is accessible to anyone, but there's a steep learning curve involved. And you need a high-end gaming computer to use it."

Heller says home gardeners might want to check his company's website EZgardendesign.com which, for a small fee, allows you to create a landscaping "design book." It's a good starting point, but most home gardeners would still want to work with a professional who knows plants well, he says.

And there's always graph paper and a pencil if the learning curve proves too steep.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Before and after views of a landscaping design made using the iScape mobile app. CONTRIBUTED

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Winnipeg's Cindy Klassen, Canada's winningest Winter Olympian (1 gold, 2 silver, 3 bronze), is among the inductees to Canada's Sports Hall of Fame

IN BRIEF

Ryan nets second straight game-winner for Sens

Bobby Ryan played the hero again, scoring the winner at 5:49 of the third period as the Ottawa Senators beat the Boston Bruins 1-0 on Wednesday night to grab a 3-1 lead in their Eastern Conference quarter-final series.

After scoring the winner in overtime on Monday, Ryan poked the puck past a diving Tuukka Rask after Erik Karlsson set him up on an intentionally wide slap shot.

Craig Anderson made 22 saves in his fourth career playoff shutout for the Sens. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canucks' Gaunce slated for shoulder surgery

Vancouver Canucks forward Brendan Gaunce will undergo shoulder surgery on Thursday.

Gaunce played 57 games this season, registering five assists and 33 penalty minutes. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Juventus gets by Barça and into semifinals

Juventus made sure there were no more miracles at Camp Nou on Wednesday, as the Italian visitors held Barcelona to a 0-0 draw and advanced to the Champions League semifinals.

The second-leg stalemate sealed a 3-0 win on aggregate and came six weeks after Barcelona's historic comeback over Paris Saint-Germain.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bug buzzing again for Caps

MLS

Techera regains top form after a down year

Whitecaps Alphonso Davies, left, and Cristian Techera celebrate a goal scored by the latter against the Galaxy on April 1 at BC Place Stadium. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cristian Techera had already scored in a game earlier this month when he made a crucial play that went largely unnoticed.

Always keen to go forward, the pint-sized Vancouver Whitecaps midfielder — Techera stands just five-foot-two — tracked back some 40 yards into his own half to block what could have been a dangerous cross.

The complete performance at both ends of the pitch in that 4-2 defeat of the Los Angeles Galaxy, the Whitecaps' first victory of the Major League Soccer season, was just one example of how the Uruguayan nicknamed "The Bug" has rediscovered his form in 2017.

"There's a little bit of fire under Cristian right now," said Vancouver goalkeeper David Ousted. "He's playing really well."

That wasn't the case last season.

Techera made an immediate impact after joining the Whitecaps on loan from his club in Uruguay in 2015, scoring seven times in 22 games.

Vancouver had seen enough to finalize a permanent deal before the 2016 campaign, but Techera showed up at training camp out of shape before a groin inflammation dogged him for a chunk of the year.

It was a forgettable season for both the player and the club, the Whitecaps missed the playoffs and Techera scored just twice.

"I sat down with him at the end of (2016)," said Vancouver head coach Carl Robinson. "I told him he had to come back with certain requirements.

"He met those requirements and he's getting the rewards."

The 24-year-old could have scored a few more times against the Galaxy, and in his fourth MLS start last Friday at home against Seattle he delivered a pinpoint cross into the Sounders penalty area that striker Fredy Montero buried for the opener of a 2-1 win.

"With any player, when they're confident and when they're on they can be electric.," Robinson said.

"Cristian certainly is in that mode at the moment."
THE CANADIAN PRESS

OBITUARY

Officials say ex-Patriot hanged himself in cell

Former NFL star Aaron Hernandez hanged himself in the prison cell where he was serving a life sentence for murder, officials said Wednesday, the same day his ex-teammates on the New England Patriots visited the White House to mark their Super Bowl victory.

His death came just days after the 27-year-old was acquitted in a second murder case.

Guards found Hernandez just after 3 a.m., Correction Department spokesman Christopher Fallon said. The one-time tight end was pronounced dead at hospital about an hour later.

Hernandez had been housed in a single cell in a general population unit at the maximum-security state prison in Shirley, Mass. He tried to jam the cell door to prevent guards from opening it and hanged himself with a bedsheet tied to a window, Fallon said.

Aaron Hernandez GETTY IMAGES

Fallon said officials had no reason to believe Hernandez might take his life, and if they had had any such worries, he would have been transferred to a mental-health unit.

Later Wednesday, U.S. President Donald Trump welcomed the Patriots to the White House. Star quarterback Tom Brady did not join his teammates as the White House said it was notified the star QB was dealing with a "personal family matter."
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA PLAYOFFS

Rockets rise above Westbrook's 51 points

James Harden scored 35 points and the Houston Rockets overcame 51 points from Russell Westbrook in a triple-double, clawing back from a double-digit deficit for a 115-111 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the first-round Western Conference playoff series.

Westbrook set a franchise playoff scoring record and added 13 assists and 10 rebounds in the most points ever scored in a post-season triple-double.

GAME 2 In Houston

ROCKETS	THUNDER
115	111

It was the sixth career playoff triple-double for Westbrook, who had an NBA-record 42 in the regular season.

Game 3 is Friday night in Oklahoma City.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Healthy ALT (Avocado Lettuce Tomato)

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Avocado adds a satisfying creaminess to this diner classic. Sorry bacon, no hard feelings, okay?

Ready in 5 minutes
Prep Time: 5 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 4 basil leaves, torn
- 1/2 avocado, pitted and mashed
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tomato
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/2 a head of Boston bibb lettuce
- 4 pieces of multigrain bread, toasted
- sea salt

Directions

1. Cut tomato and lay out on a plate. Coat with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt.

2. Meanwhile, mash avocado in a medium bowl and then add lemon juice and torn basil. Mix until smooth.

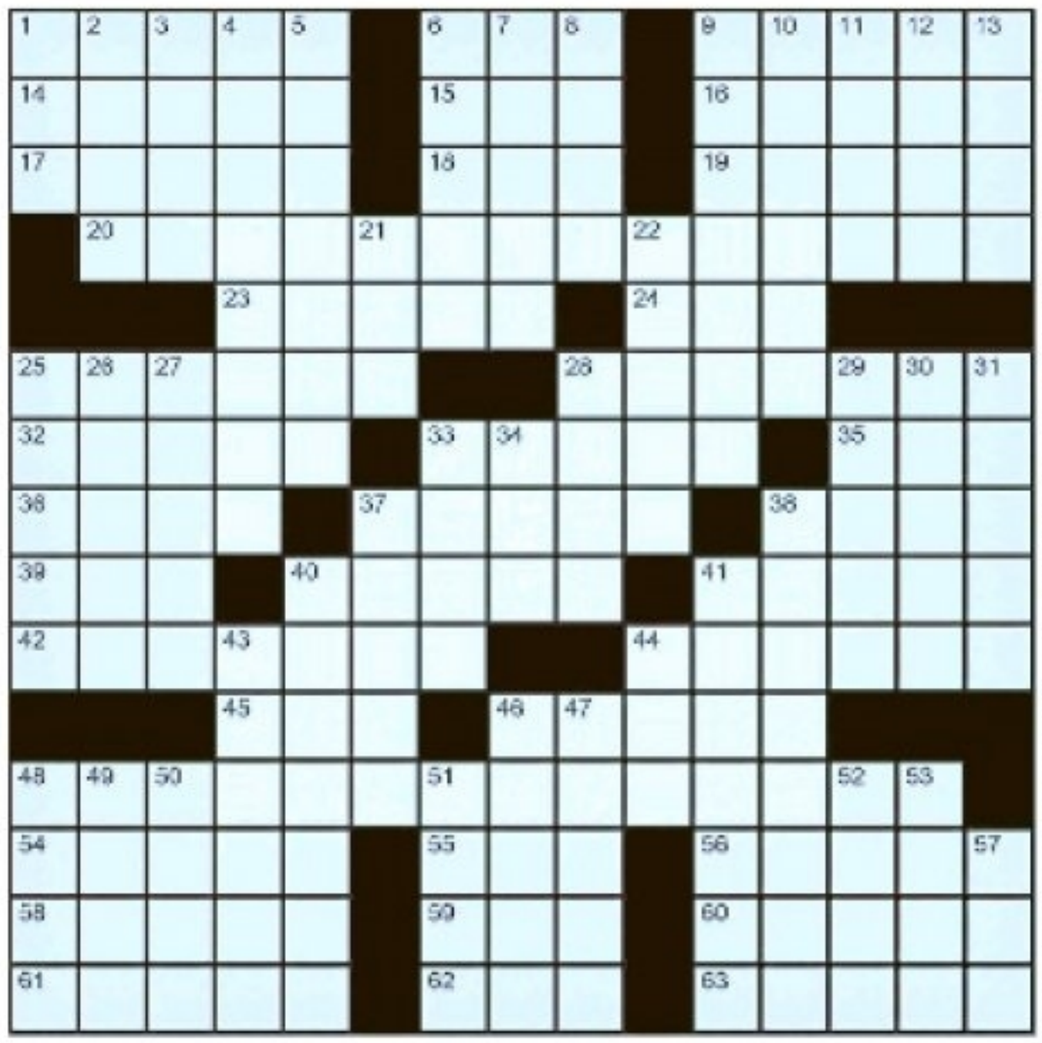
3. Toast bread and then smear about a tablespoon and a half of the avocado spread onto the bread. Finish by adding tomato slices and a few pieces of lettuce.

4. Cut in half or in quarters and serve with some cucumber slices.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Mell Lazarus comic strip
6. Noted botanist Mr. Gray
9. Sean of "Will & Grace"
14. __ closet
15. Mr. Aykroyd
16. Cherish
17. "Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler __ her eyes..." - Shakespeare
18. Backyard bug
19. Bona fide
20. Honoured Member of the Hockey Hall of Fame nicknamed 'The Big M': 2 wds.
23. Broadway star Ms. Menzel
24. Sundial number
25. Airport arrivees
28. Classic TV show for The Cartwright Family
32. Moray catcher, maybe
33. Piece of parsley
35. "That hurts!"
36. Candid pic-takers for tabloids
37. Really request
38. Ms. Turner of "The Sea Chase" (1955)
39. Informally seat, as in a theatre
40. Television pioneer, John Logie __ (b.1888 - d.1946)
41. __ eclipse
42. Artsy style of blouse or skirt
44. Mr. Sutherland
45. Submachine gun variety
46. Poseur
48. The Tragically Hip's current Juno-winning album: 3 wds.
54. Feminine inner self, in Jungian†psychology
55. Nero's 1101
56. Machu Picchu inhabitant
58. __ circle (Those in the know)
59. Ottawa, e.g.
60. 1960s rocker's jacket style
61. Heaps
62. Compass pt.
63. Small caves

DOWN
1. Commerce degree, shortly
2. Carl who composed the cantata "Carmina Burana"
3. Berth
4. Glacier's deposits
5. Revising person
6. "Frankly, my dear, I don't give __." - Rhett Butler
7. Yemen's capital city
8. Literary collection, briefly
9. Dividing
10. Fitting-here flower
11. Cartoon television Bear
12. Country singer Mr. Church
13. Mr. Rogen of movies
21. '__' __ for Kingston
22. Egg-shaped
25. Get vitalized: 2 wds.
26. Charter
27. 1st Greek letter
28. Mr. Garrett of "Everybody Loves Raymond"
29. Spiral-horned antelope
30. Districts-related
31. Grant
33. Incision
34. __ capita
37. "__ Room" (2002) starring Jodie Foster
38. Denizen of Ontario's 'Forest City'
40. Marketplaces like Istanbul's famous one
41. Dining on Cream of Mushroom or Vegetable Noodle or Lentil
43. Added up the numbers
44. Before-E's spelled out letter
46. Type sizes
47. Straight-billed marsh bird
48. Put a stamp on, then send the letter
49. AD part
50. One of Christopher Columbus' ships of 1492
51. RCN ship designation
52. Parrot
53. Store
57. Greek alphabet letters

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a wonderful day for enjoying the company of friends, as well as the company of groups to which you belong. People are in a happy mood, and they are glad to see you.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will be briefly high-viz today, but this attention will be favourable — so no worries. Enjoy your good press, because bosses, parents and VIPs will support you today.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You're excited about big travel plans. Similarly, some of you are just as excited about big plans for further training or education. Yes, you are going to expand your world!

Cancer June 22 - July 23
This is an excellent day to discuss shared property, taxes, debt and inheritances, because all parties will be fair and generous to each other. (And you likely will come out smelling like a rose.)

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
This is an excellent day to deal with partners and close friends. It's also a good day for business and working with members of the general public.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Work-related travel is likely today. Co-workers are supportive; plus, meetings, classes and groups will be positive experiences for you.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a lovely day to enjoy the company of others — especially children — because you are in a warm, loving and playful mood. Expect to meet someone from another culture.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Matters related to home and family will be positive today. This also is a good day for a family business. A gathering at your home will be a success.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
It's easy for you to be upbeat and positive today, because you believe in yourself! This is important because for Sagittarians, optimism is a survival issue.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Business and commerce are favored today. Any financial arrangements you initiate will lead to future profits.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today the Moon is in your sign, dancing with Jupiter, which is why you feel joyful and content. People will be happy to meet you and listen to your positive views.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You are content today. You realize that appreciating what you have is the key to happiness. (Negativity is wanting things to be different from the way they are.)

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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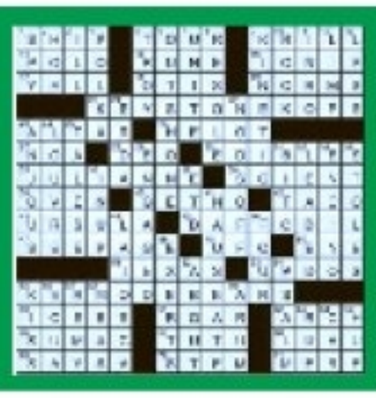

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